

OUTSTANDING IN HIS FIELD

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A couple was driving through a quiet rural landscape when they observed a man standing motionless in the center of a newly-plowed area. He continued to lean on a rake and stare as they drove closer. Being curious, they called to him when they were alongside, inquiring if he needed help. "Nope," he replied.

"Well, then, what are you doing?" the couple asked.

"I'm campaigning for the Nobel Prize," replied the man.
"WHAT???"

"Yep, I heard they give it to people who are out standing in their field."

This small tale relates to Professor Alexandre Kiss in several ways. The first is, of course, that he is known for his extensive repertoire of such stories, available to fit all occasions. Professor Kiss believes that sharing laughter with someone builds a bond that bridges differences of culture, religion, ideology, age and personality. One cannot doubt his conviction or success. His travels to meetings and lectures throughout the world during his career have left in their wake a legion of "good old friends" and countless devoted former students. The friendship and loyalty he inspires are not due to the stories, however, but to the genuine interest and care for others he displays and which is always apparent, The *festschrift* prepared for him five years ago and this collection attest to the widespread respect and affection he gains.

The second way in which the opening story relates to Professor Kiss is by way of contrast. Unlike the fanner, Profession Kiss has never been content to simply Stand still in his field. He left his native Hungary as a student to undertake advanced studies in France and the Hague. Afterwards, from his early work compiling a seven-volume digest of French diplomatic practice, through his direction of the International Institute of Human Rights and, most importantly and lastingly, his development of the field of international environmental law, Professor Kiss has been a pioneering force in advancing the rule of law to address the globe's most fundamental problems. He has been recognized and acknowledged with prizes and citations, but he would certainly point to the corpus of international environmental law as his highest achievement. In closing his lectures to students, Professor Kiss often reminds them of the choices they have. He notes that in fifty years time he will no longer be here to be concerned for a clean and healthy environment, instead, it is up to them to decide the kind of world they want for their children and grandchildren. This book, to which many of Professor Kiss's friends, colleagues and students have contributed, explains some of the problems and some of the choices to each reader. It is a fitting tribute to this towering figure who is outstanding in his field.

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